

Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change
Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2021, 2021 7:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Commissioners

Ramón Bueno
Liz Galloway
Eliza Johnston
Aladdine Joroff – Approved
Julie Wood
Larry Yu – Chair
Christine Blais – *Ex-officio*

Commissioners Attending: Ramón Bueno, Liz Galloway, Eliza Johnston, Aladdine Joroff, Julie Wood, Larry Yu, Christine Blais

Commissioners Not Attending: N/A

Staff Attending: Russell Koty, Eric Satin-Hernandez

Members of the Public Attending: Mary Mangan

Meeting started at 7:03 PM.

Review and approve meeting minutes from October and November 2021:

- MOTION: Ramón Bueno moved to approve the minutes from the October 2021 and November 2021 meetings at 7:09 PM. Motion seconded by Eliza Johnston. Aladdine Joroff abstained. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY at 7:10 PM.

City Updates:

- American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”) update and discussion, presented by Erica Satin-Hernandez, ARPA Specialist, City of Somerville.
 - See attached slide deck.
 - Eliza asked about who the ‘awardees’ could be. Erica responded that both municipal and community service providers would be eligible. Eliza suggested that building energy management might be an area to consider given COVID-related air-quality concerns and lack of energy savings that Somerville saw while buildings were offline in 2020.
 - Ramón commented on the comprehensive nature of the evaluation process and Erica highlighted the importance of equitable impacts.
 - Erica wants to make sure all the community assessments (Climate Forward, Food Assessment, etc.) are available to community members as they consider areas of focus.
 - Erica walked through the list of applicable funding categories (available on www.somervillema.gov/arpa) and suggested that the CEUCC consider a topic or two that they might want to support: energy, green space, stormwater, etc. (latter two might be covered by other groups within the City).
 - Aladdine asked about the target for the utility support and suggested that we consider looking at the gaps by the state programs. Christine agreed and suggested that the rental licensing and energy standards and energy disclosure Climate Forward priority action could be the focus for our spending suggestion.

- Larry Yu noted that Highland Ave. is a potential site for an Eversource geothermal microdistrict and that Somerville Housing Authority is a landlord on that site. However, the funding timing might not work out.
- Mary Mangan raised the concern that there may be home-specific issues that must be addressed before other improvements can be made. She suggested a survey that could be circulated to assess 'readiness' for properties. Christine recommended this be addressed through the rental registry.
- Rental licensing initiative update, by Russell Koty, OSPCD-Housing Division, Programs Manager, City of Somerville:
 - Russell Koty provided an overview. The City applied for technical assistance from the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy in November with support from the Welcome Project and Community Action Agency of Somerville. They are anticipating a decision in December. If awarded, the assistance will help conduct focus groups for tenants, landlords, and stakeholders related to program implementation.
 - Ramón mentioned innovative techniques like on-bill financing and other resources that we might be able to address split incentives. The City is open to considering pilot programs. In addition to facilitating an education program for tenants and landlords, the program will provide the City up-to-date information about rental units.
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act update and discussion: *Defer conversion until next month*
- Lower Mystic Vulnerability Assessment report and briefing update:
 - Resilient Mystic Collaborative knows the Commission is interested in a presentation and we will coordinate in 2022. The final report forthcoming and will be shared with the Commission when it is made available.

Cambridge resilience effort updated: *Defer conversion until next month*

Action items for Commissioners in 2022 discussion

Any and all business before the Commission

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.